

## Ski areas opening for holiday

The Associated Press

**A** week after record-setting warm temperatures forced most northern New England ski areas to postpone opening, several opened or made plans to debut for the Thanksgiving holiday weekend.

In Maine, two ski areas have opened for the season. Sugarloaf USA in Carrabassett Valley started up Monday with one slope in operation, while Sunday River in Newry kicked off Tuesday with two slopes.

Sunday River spokesman Alex Kaufman said that while some ski areas have been known to open in October, the typical start-up date is early to mid-No-

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vember, so the delay wasn't too great.

Bretton Woods spokeswoman Martha Wilson said cold temperatures last weekend in New Hampshire let snowmaking resume, days after all the snow laid down in early November melted. The ski area will open one run in its "learning area" Friday.

In Vermont, the ski season officially got under way on Wednesday, when — for the first time in memory — Sugarbush upstaged Killington as the first resort in the state to open.

Others were scheduled to follow quickly, according to the Vermont Ski Areas Association. Killington, Mount Snow and Okemo were scheduled to get at least a few trails open by Thanksgiving Day, while Stowe and Stratton were aiming for Friday. Jay Peak's official opening was set for Saturday, but it hopes to host skiers a day earlier.

Most New Hampshire resorts are aiming for early December, however, according to Ski New Hampshire's Web site.

Loon Mountain in Lincoln is holding a rail jam for snowboarders this Saturday, even if a rainstorm predicted for Thursday moves north and melts most of the snow, said spokesman Phil Mathews. But the area's season opening has been postponed to Dec. 1, when the resort plans to have two full runs open.

He said snowmaking crews are "a little bit concerned" about warmer temperatures in the forecast, but new snowmaking equipment should help them lay down a good base by opening day, even if they have to take a night or two off.

"We would rather open top to bottom than have a half-trail open for the weekend," he said.

Wilson said she hopes the late start to the season won't be followed by a freeze-and-thaw winter.

"My personal feeling is we've got the warm weather done with, so we're not going to have a mid-January thaw," she joked.